



## CONCLUSION

### On Accreditation of Institutional Capacities of Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute

#### General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution	Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute
Acronym	GSPI
Official address	P. Sevak 4, Gyumri 3126, Armenia
Previous accreditation decree and date	Not available

#### LEGAL BASIS

Guided by the regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs” approved by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N 978-Ն decree; by RA Government decree N 959-Ն (30 June, 2011) on “Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation” as well as by the Procedure on the Formation and Functioning of Accreditation Committee of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (ANQA), the Accreditation Committee of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) discussed the ANQA draft conclusion on the institutional capacities of Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute (GSPI) on the basis of self-analysis presented by GSPI, Expert Panel report, GSPI Action Plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report as well as Expert panel opinion based on the GSPI Action Plan with the presence of the ANQA representatives, the Expert Panel, and ANQA coordinator of the accreditation procedure.

**As a result of discussion the following was registered:**

**The main phases of accreditation procedure were carried out within the following periods:**

Submission of application	27 May 2015
Submission of self-evaluation report	8 September 2015
Site-visit	9-12 November 2015
Submission of expert panel report	23 February 2016

**RESULTS OF PEER REVIEW**

*The expertise of GSPI has been carried out by an independent expert panel formed in compliance with the requirements set forth by the ANQA Regulation on the Formation of Expert Panel<sup>1</sup>. The evaluation has been made according to 10 criteria of institutional accreditation approved by N 959-Ն Decree of the RA Government, 30 June 2011<sup>2</sup>.*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

When carrying out the evaluation, it has been taken into account that GSPI, according to its mission, strives to “prepare specialists with necessary knowledge and competences which are in compliance with national labor market demands through the implementation of professional academic programs (PAPs) for BA, MA and PhD qualifications.

Realizing its role in the scientific-academic, sports and cultural and socio-economic spheres of the region, as well as in the process of formation of civic society, GSPI has settled a priority of becoming a special “community center” for Gyumri city and the region of Shirak.

The Expert Panel mentions that the policy GSPI has adopted and its activity are generally in compliance with the Institute's mission. However, for the current period, there are some differences and discrepancies between the Statute and mission of the Institute which makes the development process of GSPI's activity risky. The name and the current Statute of the Institute do not reflect the full frame of GSPI's activity (the existence of non-pedagogical programs) which significantly decreases the level of recognition of the Institute. The Expert Panel has a position opinion about the fact that the Institute which has adopted a strategy of becoming a regional institution strives to change the current Statute in order to make it compliant with the mission.

There are 31 full-time and 29 part-time BA programs as well as 18 full-time MA programs in 6 faculties of GSPI. 20 research academic programs are carried out in 4 scientific directions. Both the pedagogical and non-pedagogical PAPs are generally in alignment with the Institute's mission, however, there are some PAPs which are not in line with the mission defined in the Strategic Plan (hereinafter SP). This refers to some specializations which at present are not that much demanded in the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter RA) labor market and subsequently there are only small groups which often consist of only one or two students. As far as part-time studies are concerned, there are a number of serious problems the Institute faces; in particular these refer to the insufficiency of in-class hours which leads to a non-effective realization of PAPs. The effectiveness and the objectiveness of current assessment system implementation is low, especially in terms of part-time studies in case of which the rather low level of students' academic progress has been observed.

The Expert Panel appreciates the fact that GSPI has developed a policy and procedures on recruitment of teaching and support staffs for the implementation of PAPs. The mentioned regulation which foresees a competitive selection for many positions, stimulates the Institute to have more competent staff. The latter is also stimulated by the increase of the number of staff who have been observed in recent years due to their

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<sup>1</sup> **APPENDIX 1: EXPERT PANEL COMPOSITION AND ANQA SUPPORT STAFF**

<sup>2</sup> **APPENDIX 2` SUMMATIVE EVALUATION**

scientific degrees. The fact that the majority of the teaching staff is full-time, noticeably enhances the stability of the teaching staff and the sustainable implementation of academic functions. Another positive tendency is observed according to which the Institute tries to fill-in the gap of the shortage of the teaching staff by recruiting its MA and PhD alumni. Though GSPI has certain mechanisms of teacher staff promotion, the Expert Panel finds it worrisome that throughout the last three years a decrease in the number of young teachers can be traced (from 19% to 16%). This is quite a vulnerable issue from the perspective of ensuring generation change.

At present GSPI has enough infrastructures and resources to provide professional education. However, the Expert Panel finds that GSPI needs to improve and enrich its resources. Classes at GSPI are organized in two shifts. The Expert Panel mentions that in such cases both the learning process of students and the activities of the staff will become more difficult. Notwithstanding the current academic resources (laboratories, computers, projectors, etc.), there is still a need of renovating and re-equipping technical means and laboratories. This was also ascertained by the participants who had meetings with the Expert Panel. Tuition fees are the main source of financial flows of the Institute, which endanger the financial sustainability of the Institute within the light of a decreasing number of students. Grant projects are alternative sources of financial flows, which overall cover only the 1% of GSPI's financial flows.

The procedures on students' recruitment are precise and are carried out in accordance with the regulations ratified by the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter MoES) through corresponding events organized among future applicants, and they promote the recruitment operations. The Institute has carried out research and professional orientation activities through surveys, site-visits and discussions among potential applicants, which, in the Expert Panel's opinion, can have a positive impact on the recruitment of applicants.

The Expert Panel thinks that the mechanisms and tools (questionnaires) aimed at revealing the needs of the students are not sufficiently holistic and reliable. In this respect, the low level of research of students' needs among the vast majority of part-time students is especially vulnerable. This hinders the raising of effectiveness of students' educational process. There are certain bodies in the Institute who strive to support the students and to enhance the process of revealing and satisfying their academic needs. The students have the opportunity to participate in facultative courses and to get consultations.

GSPI lacks a precise strategy referring to research and its interests in the said field. This weakens the research activity. The absence of mid-term and short-term plans in this respect also hinders the process. It is foreseen that the said plans will be invested since 2017. There are certain steps with regard to the internationalization of research activities the Institute needs to take as far as GSPI de facto does not implement any significant international research operation, except for some articles published in international journals. This diminishes the mobility of the teaching staff and the framework of cooperation with foreign higher education institutions.

The main priorities and objectives of internationalization and external relations are highlighted in the SP of the Institute. GSPI has set a goal to ensure comprehensive development of external relations, experience exchange, and to foster its internationalization.

GSPI has certain experience in implementing international projects, and at present it is involved in a number of TEMPUS Projects (ARARAT, HEN-GEAR, SuToMa, ARMENQA, etc.). Though the majority of the teaching staff dominates a foreign language, which might be sufficient for general communication, this is not enough for professional communication and for conducting academic courses in foreign language which is

necessary from the perspective of organizing student exchange programs. With the aim of enhancing the knowledge of foreign language, the Institute organizes English language trainings for its teaching staff. There is also a Language Center, where the students can participate in foreign language courses.

The Expert Panel appreciates the fact, that especially throughout the recent years certain reforms have been undertaken in the system of governance of the Institute (QA Center, University-Market Cooperation Unit etc.), which are aimed at improvement of education quality. However, the organizational structure of the Institute is not yet fully adapted to the implementation of the mission and strategic objectives. Besides, the optimal allocation of management resources is another problem to be solved, and the management is generally not carried out in accordance with the PDCA cycle. Notwithstanding the fact that the main infrastructures of the Institute do operate, the lack of scientific infrastructure is risky for the full implementation of the GSPI mission.

In recent years the implementation and development of GSPI's QA system can create favorable conditions for the formation of quality culture and for internal and external assessments. The regulations elaborated by the QA Center serve as a base for the implementation of QA functions. The involvement of both the teachers and the students in QA processes ensures more targeted and effective activity, however, the level of their participation is still low. The Institute has an internal QA system which is still in the development process. It fosters the formation of quality culture and strives to ensure the transparency of its activity.

#### **STRENGTHS**

1. GSPI has an important academic and social role, and it also solves the problem of providing the region with pedagogues.
2. GSPI has teaching and support staffs with necessary qualifications, and it reveals their needs through regular assessment.
3. GSPI has necessary resources to implement educational process.
4. The Institute has accountability system, which reveals the processes carried out in GSPI.
5. The Institute has certain experience of participating in international projects which enhances external relations.
6. The Institute has an internal QA system, which fosters the formation of quality culture.

#### **WEAKNESSES**

1. The SP of GSPI is not based on precise analyses of internal and external environments.
2. The organizational structure of GSPI is not adapted to the realization of its strategic goals, and there is a problem of optimal allocation of its management resources.
3. Some PAPs are not in line with labor market demands. The improved PAPs are not carried out consistently yet.
4. There are certain problems related to the implementation of PAPs for part-time studies. These problems concern the effectiveness of organization of educational process and assessment system.
5. The Institute does not have any policy on the development of research activity. The scientific-research priorities are not clarified either.
6. There are no necessary conditions for the students with special needs.

7. The reports developed by the Institute are mainly descriptive and are not analytical to a necessary extent.
8. The level of knowledge of foreign language at GSPI is not high.
9. The majority of processes carried out at GSPI are at “Do” and “Plan” cycles which means that the PDCA cycle is not yet closed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Mission and Goals***

- 1) To determine the mission of the Institute by reflecting the peculiarities and the strengths of GSPI, as well as the needs of the stakeholders, in particular those of the staff, alumni, students as well as the population of the region.
- 2) To make the mission, name, Statute and the actual activity of the Institute in line with each other.
- 3) To develop and put into practice precise mechanisms and procedures for the qualitative and quantitative assessment of strategic goals as well as for the improvement of the SP.
- 4) To ensure the active involvement and feedback of stakeholders (especially external ones) in the process of SP implementation.

### ***Governance and Administration***

- 5) To improve the organizational structure of the Institute by adapting it to the implementation of strategic objectives.
- 6) To develop and implement a separate regulation on ethics.
- 7) To enhance the involvement of external stakeholders in the management processes of the Institute.
- 8) With the aim of risk management, to form a separate working group which will regularly make reports on SP implementation.
- 9) To develop new mechanisms for assessing the collection, analysis and application of information on the effectiveness of management processes.

### ***Academic Programs***

- 10) To improve the list of PAPs, making them in line with labour market demands.
- 11) To develop a policy and procedures aimed at selection and modernization of teaching and learning methods.
- 12) To reflect and ensure the link of teaching and learning methods and assessment forms with the learning outcomes.
- 13) To improve the implementation of PAPs for part-time studies by developing more effective curricula.
- 14) To develop and implement a policy on struggle against plagiarism and academic honesty.
- 15) To develop grounded approaches referring to the credit calculation of courses by making the credit allocation in line with the best international practice.
- 16) To develop a formal procedure on PAP monitoring.

### ***Students***

- 17) To improve the mechanisms of revealing the students' academic needs and to observe their effectiveness.
- 18) To develop the research activities of the students and to reinforce the link between the research and learning process.
- 19) To reform the functions of University-Market Cooperation Unit directing them towards assisting the students and alumni in terms of their career.
- 20) To develop a regulation on addressing the administrative staff.
- 21) To foster the students' initiative to reveal issues.

#### ***Teaching and Support Staffs***

- 22) To elaborate professional requirements to be presented to the teaching staff in line with PAPs.
- 23) To develop and invest a system of professional trainings for the teaching staff.
- 24) To develop mechanisms of enhancing the recruitment with young teachers.
- 25) To develop and invest job descriptions for the teaching and support staffs.
- 26) To evaluate the effectiveness of activities undertaken by the support staff and to develop mechanisms for fostering the said operations.

#### ***Research and Development***

- 27) To develop precise research priorities of the Institute taking into account the scientific experience of the Chairs and the resources available.
- 28) To foster international research undertakings.
- 29) To implement research component in the PAPs at BA level and to promote its enhancement.
- 30) To promote the development of scientific activities together with other higher education institutions and scientific centers of the RA through implementing joint research topics, organizing seminars /especially for MA studies/ on problematic topics conducted by invited specialists from abroad and by other means.

#### ***Infrastructure and Resources***

- 31) With the aim of maintaining financial independence and sustainability, to ensure the diversity of external financial sources and to increase the number of grant projects.
- 32) To make financial planning and allocation taking into account the demands of PAPs.
- 33) To improve library infrastructures by developing the usage of modern technologies.
- 34) To develop the scope of IT services which will enhance the management system of the Institute, the investment of distance learning and other spheres.
- 35) To create respective conditions for students with special needs with the aim of making the academic environment accessible.

#### ***Social Responsibility***

- 36) To develop the analytical component in the system of accountability of the Institute.
- 37) To specify and develop the mechanisms of feedback from society.
- 38) To develop and invest mechanisms for assessing the services provided to the society.

### ***External Relations and Internationalization***

- 39) To take certain steps towards implementing international projects on their own initiative and investment.
- 40) To enhance the level of knowledge of foreign languages among internal stakeholders with the aim of fostering external cooperation and implementation of PAPs in foreign languages.
- 41) To activate the cooperation with other RA higher education institutions and scientific centers.

### ***Internal Quality Assurance System***

- 42) To develop and implement a policy, procedures and mechanisms of encouraging the involvement of external stakeholders in the QA processes of the Institute.
- 43) To develop and implement mechanisms of monitoring and analysis of QA system operation and to ensure the continuity of professional development of the QA staff.
- 44) To improve the process of surveys and data collection carried out in the Institute by implementing mechanisms of the validity of their implementation.

## **PEER REVIEW ACCORDING TO THE INTERNATIONAL CRITERIA**

From the perspective of the Institute's ambition to be integrated into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) the following observations and recommendations are presented.

### **Strengths of GSPI**

GSPI is a regional university which has faced a steep decline in the local economy and population, with consequent effects on student recruitment and resourcing. Despite this challenge, the Institute has registered some significant achievements such as reconstructing buildings, participation in international projects as well as encouraging staff and students to publish articles in international peer-reviewed journals. The University has a good reputation at local level, especially in Pedagogy. Teaching at the Institute is considered to be effective, and the achievements of students are measured from the perspective of the acquisition of set learning outcomes.

### **Actions to be taken to meet the European Standards**

In terms of international benchmarks the following can be mentioned, with recommendations in italics:

#### **1. Staff-student Ratios and the Management of Teaching Resources**

The current reported staff student ratio is 9/1 which, according to the European standards, is a quite high indicator and it leads to the big number of teachers. Apart from the mentioned, the number of students with some professions is rather low which brings to the wastage of resources. The support which is given in the direction of suchlike programs tends more towards teaching staff rather than local economy or students. The redundant investments which are made towards staff do not give the opportunity to the Institute to make corresponding investments in other important areas, such as e-library.

*The resources should be directed to the programs which attract students and clearly and transparently meet the demands of the regional economy.*

## **2. Strategic Management of the Institution**

Strategic planning of GSPI is at the initial stage and is not informed by precise data brought out of the analysis of internal and external environments, nor the views of external stakeholders are reflected in it. The objectives mentioned in the SP should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely). *Strategic planning should be strengthened by data collection, wider use of performance monitoring and management at the levels of Chairs and Deans. The local community should be involved in and informed about the progress on the strategic plan.*

## **3. Research**

The outputs of research which is being made by the initiation of separate staff members of the Institute, is low, when compared with the international norms, and it could be improved despite the fact that currently the publications in international peer-reviewed journals are also encouraged.

*Research targeted funds can be more efficiently used in order to foster research and the creation of knowledge for the benefit of local community. This can be fulfilled by e.g. joint funding of projects, stronger support for participation in conferences and seminars, preparation of research funding bids, etc.*

*A larger proportion of expenditure of the Institute could be allocated to the realization of the mentioned.*

## **4. Professional Academic Programs**

There are significant shortcomings in the PAPs, e.g. the lack of general understanding of the allocation of credits to modules on the base of in-class hours, the failure to implement an anti-plagiarism policy, the lack of coordination of the assessment system, the lack of effective data collection, the limited number of external review of programs etc. Taking into consideration the above mentioned, it is clear that GSPI still needs to work hard before it can join the European Higher Education Area. GSPI should:

- a) ensure that the credits are allocated to modules consistently which enable credit transfer between institutions;*
- b) publish respective materials and keep the staff aware of the European definitions of plagiarism, as well as be consistent in implementing corresponding policy, e.g. by using online anti-plagiarism software;*
- c) take steps towards consideration of the Expert Panel's observations on the student assessment system paying special attention to the assessment standards and requirements set for the given assignments;*
- d) ensure collection of data on progression of the students by using the results of internal and external benchmarkings;*
- e) take steps towards regular reviews of the programs, including external reviewers in this process.*

## **5. Language Policy**

Although the 30% of library stock covers literature in Russian, and in some subject areas the literature in Russian predominates, the new applicants of GSPI do not have the respective level of proficiency in Russian.



*GSPI should define the long-term policy set against the requirements in language proficiency for the application as well as should support its students to improve their language proficiency. This should be combined with the respective strategy on library resources acquisition which will give all the students an opportunity to use literature in the language they are able to understand.*

### **GSPI comments and suggestions on the Draft of Expert Panel Report**

On 4 February 2016 GSPI presented comments and suggestions on the draft of the Expert Panel Report to ANQA. On 15 February 2016 ANQA organized a meeting for the representatives of the Institute and the Expert Panel during which the feedback of the Expert Panel was presented. Taking into consideration the Institute's comments and explanations, the Expert Panel made some changes in the final Expert Panel Report, however, the results of the evaluation per accreditation criteria were not changed. Respective notes about the changes made by the Expert Panel in the final report are mentioned as a footnote on corresponding pages.

### **GSPI ACTION PLAN ON THE ELIMINATION OF SHORTCOMINGS MENTIONED IN EXPERT PANEL REPORT**

*GSPI accepts that the recommendations presented by the Expert Panel are within the scope of the Institute's strategy, and it has submitted for the action plan and time schedule on the elimination of shortcomings (hereinafter: Action Plan).*

Having examined the Institute's action plan based on the recommendations presented in the final Expert Panel report, the Expert Panel **comes to a conclusion** that:

- an action plan has been developed aimed at efficient implementation of strategies set for all the ten aspects.
- the succession of the activities is mostly logical, except for some cases.
- responsible people are mentioned for the fulfillment of the activities.
- respective resources are provided for the solution of most of the mentioned problems. However, in some cases both material and financial resources are missing.
- the deadlines set for the fulfillment of the activities are mostly realistic, except for some cases.
- the outputs of the steps are directed to the accomplishment of the goals of activities.
- there are measurement indicators for the evaluation of activities. However, the impact indicators are absent.

GSPI action plan has the following components for the elimination of shortcomings of separate criteria of accreditation:

**1. Mission and Goals.** Within the criteria of Mission and Goals the Institute plans a row of actions according to which it is planned to clarify the mission and the Statute of the Institute, to develop mechanisms of assessment, monitoring and improvement of SP, ensuring the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the implementation process of SP. In general, positively assessing the developed action plan for the improvement, it should be mentioned that a respective decree of the RA Government is expected for the

clarification of the Institute's mission. The decree is mentioned as an indicator assessing the output but as far as it is not within the functional framework of the Institute, this undertaking contains some risks.

**2. Governance and Administration.** Based on the Expert Panel's assessment and respective recommendations, the Institute has developed certain plans to reform its organizational structure in compliance with the strategic goals. The Institute has put forward the issue to develop a separate regulation on ethics. A special attention is paid the promotion of external stakeholders' involvement in management processes as well as internal stakeholders' active participation. For managing risks, it is planned to develop systems which will assess the effectiveness the accountability as well as the management processes. Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that the development and application of the regulation on ethics can be viewed as one general step. The developed regulation should already involve mechanisms of efficient usage. No deadlines can be set for the application of the regulation as far as this is a continuous process. There are not any financial resources which could be used for the establishment of respective structural units managing scientific and research activities as well as human resources of the Institute. Subsequently, this makes the implementation of those activities risky.

**3. Professional Academic Programs.** With the aim to solve the problems existing within the scope of the given criterion, the Institute has presented planned steps which are first of all aimed at the improvement of PAPs as well as the policy on modernizing teaching/learning methods and selection of assessment forms. It is planned to develop a respective procedure. The improvement of mechanisms of calculating credits is also planned. In the action plan a special attention is paid to the part-time study system where the existent problems are emphasized. Here the improvement of both curricula and current regulation are planned, and e-learning courses for the successful implementation of those curricula are planned to invest. The issue on raising the level of academic honesty is also mentioned in the action plan. The efficient mechanisms of monitoring, assessment and improvement of PAPs are given importance to as well.

The QA Center is not viewed as a resource to be used for the fulfillment of the above mentioned row of activities. The involvement of the QA Center would make the effectiveness of the planned activities more reliable. This especially refers the development of the policy and respective procedure on selection and modernization of teaching/learning methods and assessment forms. The review of only in-class load included in the curricula for part-time studies cannot be sufficient for making significant changes in the quality of the curricula. On the other hand, the in-class hours involved in the curricula for part-time studies cannot exceed the respective norms. In this respect the learning methods in part-time study system can also become the target for improvement.

**4. Students.** Within the given aspect, the Institute plans to improve the mechanisms of revealing students' academic needs, to develop research activities of students, to support students and alumni in their career, to develop a regulation for addressing the administrative staff as well as to promote students to put forward their problems. It is intended to upgrade the effectiveness of the activity of the University-Market Cooperation Unit and to ensure the full involvement of the Unit in the educational processes of the Institute. The Expert Panel gives importance to the steps which aim to increase students' involvement in the Institute's research activities and international conferences. However, the mechanisms by means of which the Institute strives to fulfill those goals are not clear. We think that one trimester is not enough especially for the organization of and participation in job fairs.

**5. Teaching and Support Staffs.** Analyzing the recommendations relating to the given criterion, the Institute plans to review and implement a policy which will foster the selection, assessment and professional

development of the teaching staff as well as the involvement of young specialists. If all the mentioned activities are fulfilled, the Institute may have achievements. It should be noted that the deadlines for reaching some outcomes (e.g. to have teaching and support staffs in line with the job descriptions) are not realistic, and in many cases especially the impact indicators are missing, or the responsible units and resources are not enough for the implementation of the presented activities.

**6. Research and Development.** In the Expert Panel conclusion the improvement process of the Institute's activity has been given importance to. Based on the Expert Panel's recommendation as well as having certain scientific potential, the Institute has developed some steps to solve the problems existing in the scope of this criterion. The development of precise directions of the Institute's research activity has been first of all given importance to. It will lead to the revelation of guidelines of the development of the given aspect. It is planned to foster the internationalization of scientific activity, the investment of research component in BA system as well as to reinforce the scientific cooperation with other RA higher education institutions and scientific centers. However, the financial and material resources by means of which the Institute plans to implement that activity are not clearly emphasized. Within the framework of the process activating international research activities of the Institute, mechanisms have been suggested to develop. One year has been given for the fulfillment of this process, however, it should have been presented and clarified in more detailed steps. In this respect it can be considered to be risky.

**7. Infrastructure and Resource.** Despite the existing educational resources, the Institute tries to equip more and improve more the educational environment and make it more compliant with the learning outcomes deriving from the PAPs. The Institute highly prioritizes the fundraising from other financial sources in order to ensure the sustainability of the Institute. Nevertheless, the steps taken towards that precede the step towards becoming a foundation, mentioned in the action plan and time schedule, while it should be vice versa. Within the strict deadlines and mostly simultaneously, the Institute aims to establish a number of profit centers (language laboratories, gym, social center, computer literacy center etc.). We think that the deadlines which are set for the implementation of the mentioned activities are not realistic as far as they are carried out in parallel which can actually impede the organization and implementation processes as well as fundraising and allocation of financial resources. Some indicators and outputs are not clear (e.g. the indicator of establishing e-library, the output of establishing laboratory providing distant learning). The steps directed to the diversification of financial sources can be vulnerable from the perspective of being carried out in parallel. Besides in the aspects of resources the fact that the Institute has sufficient financial means for the implementation of the above mentioned activities is not substantiated.

**8. Social Responsibility.** The Institute plans to develop the analytical component in the internal accountability system, to clarify and develop the mechanisms of feedback received from the society, as well as to develop and apply mechanisms of assessing the services provided to the society. Despite the sequence of existing steps, we think that the development and application of the policy and mechanisms of efficient feedback received by the society should precede the application of mechanisms assessing the facultative educational and consultancy services provided to the society.

**9. International Relations and Internationalization.** The Institution has presented some activities and steps in the action plan which are directed to the investment of international projects by its own initiative and investment and which foster the internal stakeholders' proficiency in foreign languages and activation of cooperation with RA higher education institutions and different scientific centers. It must be mentioned that

there aren't either clearly defined outcomes (e.g. step 39.2) or indicators (step 40.2). The substitution of the action and the respective step is also necessary.

**10. Internal Quality Assurance System.** Studying the Expert Panel's observations made within the scope of the given criterion as well as taking into account the recommendations provided by the Expert Panel, the Institute has given importance to the development of policy, procedures and mechanisms fostering the external stakeholders' participation in QA processes, as well as the implementation of monitoring and analysis of the functioning of the QA system. By conducting surveys and actively operating the process of data collection, the Institute has the willingness to raise the level of their reliability by developing respective mechanisms. The professional chairs, being the main responsible units for ensuring education quality, are not considered as a resource to be used for the implementation of the developed steps. The Expert Panel thinks that the involvement of the chairs and other stakeholders in these processes will significantly increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the steps.

*The Expert Panel finds that the implementation of the main part of the action plan for the elimination of shortcomings is realistic and it mostly does not contain any risks. The fulfillment of the planned activities and steps will serve as a base for the Institute. However, to ensure the controllability of the plan, it is necessary to review some outcomes and to define impact assessment indicators for separate activities.*

Based on the aforementioned, ANQA suggests the Accreditation Committee to draw GSPI's special attention to the implementation of the following activities while making decision:

- 1) To give urgent solution to the problems existing in the spheres of **Professional Academic Programs, Governance and Administration, and Research & Development.**
- 2) According to the requirements of Clause 12 of the Regulation on "State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Educational Programs" or according to the deadlines set by the Accreditation Committee, to regularly present a written report to ANQA on the results of the carried out activities.
- 3) To review the action plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report taking into account the remarks about the action plan mentioned in the current conclusion.

ANQA finds that the suggested reforms will foster the fulfillment of the Institute's ambitions mentioned in the SER and will serve as a basis for the next evaluation.

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**Head of ANQA Institutional and  
Programme Accreditation  
Department**

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**Head of Expert Panel**

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**ANQA coordinator**

**Appendix 1**

**EXPERT PANEL COMPOSITION**

The external evaluation of GSPI institutional capacities was carried out by the Expert Panel having the following composition:

1. **Vardan Sargsyan** – Doctor, Professor in Economics, Head of Chair of Economic Computer Science and Information Systems, Armenian State University of Economics.
2. **Patrick David Gray** - Head of Chair of Social Professions, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, London Metropol University.
3. **Garegin Hambardzumyan** – PhD, Associate Professor of Chair of Physiology of Yerevan State Medical University after M. Heratsy.
4. **Margarita Shahverdyan** – PhD in Psychology, Head of the Center of Quality Assurance, State Pedagogical University after H. Tumanyan of Vanadzor.
5. **Gohar Mikaelyan** – student at Armenian National Agrarian University.

ANQA support staff

- **Varduhi Gyulazyan** – Senior Specialist of the Department of Institutional and Program Expertise Department of ANQA, coordinator of GSPI institutional accreditation process.
- **Zaruhi Sghomonyan** – Head of Chair of Foreign Languages, French University in Armenia, translator.

**Appendix 2**

### SUMMATIVE EVALUATION<sup>3</sup>

The Expert Panel presented its evaluation per accreditation criterion in the following table:

CRITERION	EVALUATION
1. <i>Mission and Goals</i>	SATISFACTORY
2. <i>Governance and Administration</i>	UNSATISFACTORY
3. <i>Academic programs</i>	UNSATISFACTORY
4. <i>Students</i>	SATISFACTORY
5. <i>Teaching and Support Staffs</i>	SATISFACTORY
6. <i>Research and Development</i>	UNSATISFACTORY
7. <i>Infrastructure and Resources</i>	SATISFACTORY
8. <i>Social Responsibility</i>	SATISFACTORY
9. <i>External Relations and Internationalization</i>	SATISFACTORY
10. <i>Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	SATISFACTORY

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<sup>3</sup> While carrying out the evaluation the Expert Panel followed the Regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs” and the procedure described in the ANQA Accreditation Manual carrying out firstly evaluation per standards and then per criteria. “**unsatisfactory**” and “**satisfactory**” evaluation scale was applied.

The Expert Panel followed the below mentioned principles while carrying out the evaluation:

-**unsatisfactory**: if the University does not meet the demands of the criterion and it is not allowed to continue the activities that way and urgent improvements are needed

-**satisfactory**: if the University meets the demands of the criterion yet there might be need for improvements as well